

What to WATCH

TEN 1HD
Sri Lanka v Zimbabwe
First ODI
Live from 10:30am
SONY SIX & TEN 1HD
West Indies v India
Third ODI
Live from 7:00pm

TWINS TAKE AWAY RONALDO

Portugal's superstar captain Cristiano Ronaldo revealed yesterday he will not play in the Confederations Cup third-place match this weekend as he will finally meet his newborn twin boys. Hours after Wednesday's 3-0 defeat to Chile in a penalty shoot-out in Kazan, Ronaldo said he had been given permission to miss the play-off in Moscow, against either Germany or Mexico, to meet his new arrivals. Ronaldo, 32, is believed to have fathered the twins with a surrogate mother in the United States and already has a seven-year-old son, Cristiano Ronaldo Jr, from a previous relationship. The Real Madrid forward says he gave his "body and soul" for Portugal in the semi-final, which finished goalless after extra time, "even though my two sons were born." "The President of the Portuguese Football Federation and the national coach have an attitude that has touched me and I will not forget," the four-time world player of the year wrote on his official Facebook page. "I'm very happy to finally be with my children for the first time." —AFP



Chile goalkeeper Claudio Bravo is lifted in the air by his teammates after his heroics in the penalty shootout won them the Confederations Cup semifinal against Portugal at the Kazan Arena on Wednesday.

Chile's impressive rise continues

AFP, Kazan



Chile's indestructible team spirit and unyielding attitude have laid the foundations for a hugely successful run that will see them contest a third straight international final at the Confederations Cup.

Claudio Bravo proved Chile's hero on Wednesday as the Manchester City goalkeeper saved all three penalties to eliminate Portugal in a semi-final shootout following a 0-0 draw after extra time in Kazan.

"That was unbelievably stressful," admitted the 34-year-old Bravo, as Chile won 3-0 on penalties to set up a showdown on Sunday with Germany or Mexico.

"This team never gives up, which means we can achieve great things like this."

While Bravo showed nerves of steel, his team-mates transformed iron will into cool composure as Arturo Vidal, Charles Aranguiz and Alexis Sanchez calmly converted their spot-kicks.

With the European champions vanquished, Chile are eager for a potential rematch with world champions Germany as they attempt to add the Confederations Cup trophy to their 2015 and 2016 Copa America titles in Saint Petersburg.

"That was a crazy end, the first penalty is

always the most important," said Vidal, who buried Chile's opening spot-kick just inside the post.

"We fought like crazy and now we hope we can face Germany in the final and also win."

Chile qualified for Russia as South American champions, ahead of powerhouses Argentina and Brazil -- winners of the Confederations Cup in 1997, 2005, 2009 and 2013.

Chile ended a 99-year wait for a maiden Copa America title in 2015, defeating Argentina on penalties, before retaining their crown a year later in a special centenary edition.

The rise of Chile's La Roja has been consistent, and they were unlucky to lose out to 2014 World Cup hosts Brazil on penalties in the last 16 after beating defending champions Spain 2-0 in the group stage.

They shook off that heartbreak to lift the Copa America on home soil in 2015, with Lionel Messi again reduced to tears and briefly announcing his international retirement as Chile downed Argentina following another shootout in 2016, this time in the US.

Forward Eduardo Vargas was the 2016

Copa America's top scorer with six goals, while Alexis Sanchez was voted best player and Bravo was nominated as best goalkeeper.

The back-to-back titles were achieved with roughly the same squad, ensuring it is a group that can draw on the invaluable experience of achieving success on the big stage.

QUICK SINGLES

The following are a few samples of stories that did not make the print edition. However, if they pique your interest, you can always read them online on The Daily Star website by simply scanning the QR codes listed below:

McEnroe regrets Serena 'No. 700 on men's tour' remark

John McEnroe said Wednesday he would have

been better off never trying to compare Serena Williams to men's tennis players after the furore over his remark that she would rank "like 700 in the world".

Hip problem forces Murray out of Hurlingham

Defending champion Andy

Murray's troubled build-up to Wimbledon continued as he withdrew from playing an exhibition match because of a hip problem.

Mendes denies creating shell companies

Football super-

agent Jorge

Mendes denied he helped create shell companies for his clients during questioning by a Spanish court investigating alleged tax evasion by Monaco striker Radamel Falcao.

Veratti is the perfect player for Barca: Ronaldinho

PSG and Italian

midfielder Marco

Veratti's future

remains in the balance.

Several media outlets in Spain have claimed that the Italian wants to sign for Barcelona and has made certain gestures to make his intention clear to his present club.

Valbuena joins Fenerbahce

AFP, Istanbul

Mathieu Valbuena, the France international at the centre of an interminable sex-tape scandal, on Thursday signed for Istanbul giants Fenerbahce from Lyon.

"It's with great pride I come to play at Fenerbahce ... I'm going to fight for them to win titles," the 32-year-old told a press conference.

Valbuena signed for two years with an option for a third.

'Anything is possible'

REUTERS, Dusseldorf

Le Tour de France The Tour de France has not had a home champion since 1985, but after Romain Bardet's second-placed finish last year there are high hopes that the wine-loving 26-year-old could be sipping champagne on the Champs Elysees in three weeks' time.

The AG2R-La Mondiale rider is one of the most attack-minded in the peloton and is likely to find this year's route, which Bardet describes as "quite treacherous", to his taste.

With only four summit finishes, it favours long-range attacks and features only two short time trials.

This, he says, could throw the race wide open, but he is certainly not getting carried away about his own chances.

"Anything is possible -- in one way or another," Bardet, who was also sixth overall in 2014, told Reuters.

"I take a very modest approach, I will rely on my strengths and the final placing does not matter."

The Frenchman, who enjoys tasting wines from the Rhone valley and the Languedoc region, has had a difficult start to the season, after being thrown out of the Paris-Nice stage race for taking an illegal tow from a team car.

That forced him to change his schedule and switch focus to the Tour of Catalonia instead. He is adamant, however, that it did not disrupt his preparations.

"It's part of a high-level athlete's life. It actually made me tougher, I challenged myself," he said.

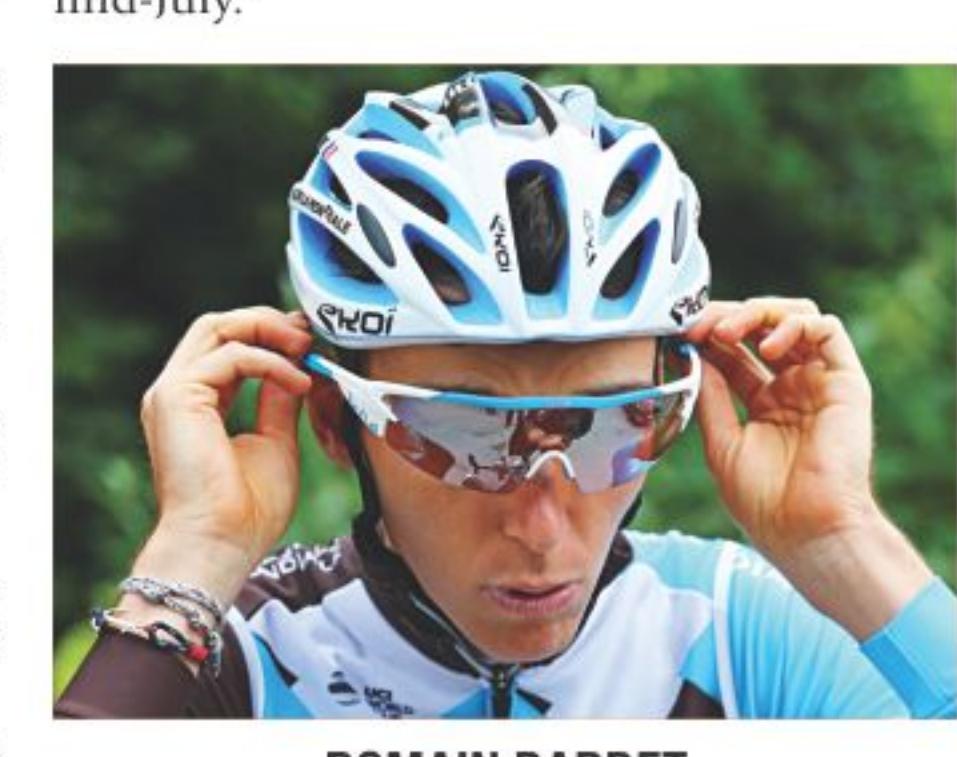
Bardet geared up nicely for the Tour de

France, which runs from July 1-23, by finishing sixth overall in the Critérium du Dauphiné earlier this month, showing great form in the mountains after losing ground in the time trial.

Bardet, who is as softly-spoken as he is wildly aggressive on the bike, said the week-long warm-up offered few clues as to how he will get on in the Tour.

"I'm very well and very much looking forward to taking part in my fifth Tour de France. I have been resting and training well since the Dauphiné," he said.

"But things can change between June and mid-July."



ROMAIN BARDET

Bardet said his team, with Swiss Mathias Frank, eighth overall on the Tour in 2015, and France's Pierre Latour, who won a Vuelta stage last year, was the strongest he had ever had around him.

He will, however, be deprived of the services of 'domestique de luxe' and long-time friend Mikael Cherel, who suffered a hairline fracture to his pelvis during a training camp.

The duo launched a decisive attack on a wet descent in the Tour last year that put Bardet up to second overall.

In his second 100m outing of his final season, the Jamaican was slow out of the blocks but jumped ahead before the halfway point to finish in a time of 10.06 seconds, just edging Yunier Perez of Cuba, who ran a personal best 10.09 seconds.

Bolt, who has eight Olympic golds and 13 world championship medals, will retire after August's world championships.

The 30-year-old said he was not happy about clocking over 10 seconds for the second straight race, although he remained confident about the remainder of the season.

"I am not happy with the time but I am just getting to my running," he told the sellout crowd after his ninth and final appearance at the meet in the eastern Czech industrial city.

"I have some training to do... But I will be fine."

Bolt has become a regular at the Ostrava meet and his fans showed their appreciation at the end of the night, holding up placards to form the Jamaican flag as Tina Turner's "Simply the Best" played in the stadium.

"The biggest thing is always the crowd... That

Football stars set for Messi's wedding

AFP, Rosario

Football and showbiz stars gather in northern Argentina on Friday for Latin America's celebrity wedding bash of the decade when Barcelona superstar Lionel Messi marries his childhood sweetheart Antonella Roccuzzo.

Pop star Shakira and her husband, Messi's teammate Gerard Pique, are expected among the 260 guests, according to media and locals close to the event.

They will join old friends of the couple and footballers such as his Barcelona strike partners Luis Suarez and Neymar.

The party at a casino in his hometown Rosario will be a respite for the player from his legal woes. A Spanish court last month rejected his appeal against a conviction for tax fraud.

Brunette bride Roccuzzo, 29, will wear a dress by Spanish designer Rosa Clara, which has been flown over from Barcelona.

The designer has dressed stars such as actresses Eva Longoria and Sofia Vergara as well as Spain's Queen Letizia.

From 2200 GMT the guests will pack into the Hotel City-Center Casino, which stands right next to a crime-ridden slum run by druggangs.

It is not known whether the guests

will also get a song from Shakira, the Colombian diva famous for "Whenever, Wherever."

Some 155 journalists have been

"Messi's wedding accentuates the sense of inequality that is symbolized by the casino in that neighbourhood," said Carlos del Frade, author of several books on the drug trade in Rosario.

This city of 1.2 million people is also a cradle of footballing talent, however.

"Rosario lives and breathes football. That is another reason Lionel feels so comfortable here," the city's mayor, Monica Fein, told AFP.

"All the same, the security systems will never overlook the probability of a lot of people wanting to approach him, wanting to touch him, take photos with him, from their risk analysis."

The civil wedding ceremony and party will all take place inside the venue, and the guests will be lodged there too.

Messi, 30 -- considered a man of few words -- has reportedly asked chefs to cook local delicacies such as "locro" stew and "empanada" pasties for the feast.

The star dish is a typical Argentine beef roast including chitterlings, gizzards and kidneys.

Uruguayan pop bands Rombai and Marama plus singer Karina, wife of Argentina footballer Sergio Aguero, will perform at the dance.

"It's no surprise that he is coming back here to get married," one of the wedding guests, the player's old school friend Diego Vallejos, told AFP.

"He is an ordinary person who just wants to be near his family and friends. He is a humble person. Money has not changed his personality."

Messi and Roccuzzo met as children. He moved to Spain when he was 13 to join FC Barcelona. But they kept in touch.

"They are the love of each other's lives," says Vallejos.

Bolt triumphs in last European race

REUTERS, Ostrava

Usain Bolt overcame a slow start to win the 100 metres at the Ostrava Golden Spike meeting on Wednesday as he gears up for a final world championships in London this summer.

In his second 100m outing of his final season, the Jamaican was slow out of the blocks but jumped ahead before the halfway point to finish in a time of 10.06 seconds, just edging Yunier Perez of Cuba, who ran a personal best 10.09 seconds.

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"The biggest thing is always the crowd... That

"I was ready to dig deep and just get used to the feeling of the longer events. I am pleased with today."

Britain's Mo Farah held on to beat Mathew Kimeli of Kenya in the 10,000m with a time of 27 minutes 12.09 seconds.

"The biggest thing is always the crowd... That



Jamaican sprint superstar Usain Bolt competes in the IAAF World Challenge Zlata Tretra athletics tournament in Ostrava on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS